Title: Need to provide rail link to Dhanushkodi in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI K. MALAISAMY (RAMANATHAPURAM): Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu is a leading, age-old *puranic* pilgrim centre in India attracting several thousands of devotees and tourists every day. Dhanushkodi, a close-by coastal village of Rameshwaram at a distance of 16 Kms, is again an important pilgrim centre.

On an average around 3000 pilgrims are visiting this place daily. During the time of Adi Amavasai and Thai Amavasai festivals, around 50,000 men and women are visiting Dhanushkodi.

However, neither rail facilities nor regular bus services are available from Rameswaram to Dhanushkhodi. Private services like jeeps/vans are the only medium of conveyance now. As such, enormous hardships and sufferings are faced by the visiting public.

Rail facilities are now available up to Rameswaram. Extension of such facilities up to Dhanushkodi is a felt need of the hour.

I request the hon. Minister of Railways to take up the proposal on priority.